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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/002,745	11/02/2001	Toshio Ueno	01703/LH	3835
1933	7590	05/22/2006	EXAMINER	
FRISHAUF, HOLTZ, GOODMAN & CHICK, PC			CHEA, PHILIP J	
220 Fifth Avenue			ART UNIT	
16TH Floor			PAPER NUMBER	
NEW YORK, NY 10001-7708			2153	

DATE MAILED: 05/22/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/002,745

Applicant(s)

UENO, TOSHIO

Examiner

Philip J. Chea

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 March 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 21-43 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 21-43 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 3/02, 4/05 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/15/06.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

This Office Action is in response to an Amendment filed March 15, 2006. Claims 21-43 are currently pending of which claims 21-43 are new. Any rejection not set forth below has been overcome by the current Amendment.

Information Disclosure Statement

1. The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted on March 15, 2006 was filed after the mailing date of the Final Rejection on December 15, 2005. The submission is in compliance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97. Accordingly, the information disclosure statement is being considered by the examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

4. Claims 21-32, 41,42,43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sheflott et al. (US 5,802,493), herein referred to as Sheflott further in view of Goldberg et al. (US 6,711,570), herein referred to as Goldberg.

As per claims 21,23,25, Sheflott discloses a knowledge base section which stores various claim reports and solutions to problems presented by the claim reports (see Fig. 6 [206]); and

a service information portal section (see Fig. 4 [118]);

a claim handling section which registers a new claim report in the knowledge base section (see Fig. 9);

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wherein the claim handling section: (i) determines technical divisions which share a market countermeasure task of solving a unique problem presented by the new claim report and of developing a countermeasure part that does not encounter the unique problem (see Fig. 4 [134] and column 7, lines 53-59, where a subject area expert implies determining a technical division that can solve the unique problem), (ii) issues task sheets for the market countermeasure task to the technical divisions (see column 7, lines 54-67, where task sheets are implied by the expert fulfilling their task of answering the question), (iii) receives the task sheets returned from the technical divisions so as to update a state of progress of the market countermeasure task (see column 7, lines 62-67, where evaluation to include the answer in the data base implies updating state of progress).

Although the system disclosed by Sheflott shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose that the portal section provides web pages as information input and output interfaces.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Sheflott, as evidenced by Goldberg.

In an analogous art, Goldberg discloses a knowledge management system where a document can be submitted to a server through an interface maintained on a Web server (see column 4, lines 27-30).

Given the teaching of Goldberg, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Sheflott by employing the system of Goldberg, in order to automate the submission process of the document and parse the document for matches of knowledge terms (see Goldberg column 5, lines 29-37).

As per claims 22,24,26, Sheflott in view of Goldberg further discloses that the claim handling section is configured to display the state of progress of the market countermeasure task (see Sheflott column 18, lines 16-44).

As per claim 27, Sheflott in view of Goldberg further disclose that the technical divisions comprise a design division, a production division, and a quality certification division (see Sheflott column 3, lines 25-34, column 9, lines 61-67).

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As per claim 28, Sheflott in view of Goldberg further disclose that the state of progress is a selected one of a plurality of steps (see Sheflott column 9, lines 36-42).

As per claim 29, Sheflott in view of Goldberg further disclose that the selected step is updated based on combination of tasks completed in the technical divisions (see Sheflott column 9, lines 36-42).

As per claim 30, Sheflott in view of Goldberg further disclose that the consecutive steps comprise: a first step of confirming and verifying a claim content of the new claim report (see Sheflott Fig. 4 [124]), a second step of performing cause investigation and solution estimation (see Fig. 4 [128]), a third step of performing a trial production and effectiveness test of the countermeasure part (see Fig. 4 [178]), a fourth step of preparing the countermeasure part for market application (see Fig. 4 [182]), and a fifth step of monitoring effectiveness of the countermeasure part in the market (see Fig. 4 [171], where monitoring is implied by monitoring the effectiveness of the Q/A database and how many new solutions must be found).

As per claim 31, Sheflott in view of Goldberg further disclose that the technical divisions comprise a design division, a production division, and a quality certification division (see Sheflott column 3, lines 25-34, column 9, lines 61-67).

As per claim 32, Sheflott in view of Goldberg further disclose that the consecutive steps comprise: a first step of confirming and verifying a claim content of the new claim report (see Sheflott Fig. 4 [124]), a second step of performing cause investigation and solution estimation (see Fig. 4 [128]), a third step of performing a trial production and effectiveness test of the countermeasure part (see Fig. 4 [178]), a fourth step of preparing the countermeasure part for market application (see Fig. 4 [182]), and a fifth step of monitoring effectiveness of the countermeasure part in the market (see Fig. 4 [171], where monitoring is implied by monitoring the effectiveness of the Q/A database and how many new solutions must be found).

As per claims 41,42,43, Sheflott in view of Goldberg further disclose that the claim content of the new claim report is input in a format similar to natural language (see Fig. 4 [118]), and the new claim report is registered in a format including at least a claim title structured as a combination of predetermined items of definition information expressed in standard terms, based on the claim content in the format similar to the natural language (see Fig. 10).

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5. Claims 33-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sheflott in view of Goldberg as applied to claims 32 and 28 above, and further in view of Kappel et al. ("Coordination in Workflow Management Systems – A Rule-Based Approach"), herein referred to as Kappel.

As per claim 33, although the system disclosed by Sheflott in view of Goldberg shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose that the state of progress is updated to the fourth step when a task of the design division is completed.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Sheflott in view of Goldberg, as evidenced by Kappel.

In an analogous art, Kappel discloses a workflow management system to coordinate policies in a business environment (see Abstract). Further showing that it would have been obvious to update the state of progress to prepare a product for market application after it the design of the product has completed (see page 9, section 3.3 *Worklist Management Policies*). Kappel shows that certain activities must be started immediately after a prerequisite step has occurred.

Given the teaching of Kappel, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Sheflott in view of Goldberg by employing a workflow management system, such as disclosed by Kappel, in order to successfully implement a product lifecycle in a organized and timely manner.

As per claim 34, Sheflott in view of Goldberg in view of Kappel further show that it would have been obvious to select the first step once the design division has received the claim report. As described above, Kappel recognizes the priorities of tasks and that controlling the occurrences of activities is necessary to adapt to changing business plans. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to a person skilled in the art to wait until a claim was filed so design engineers could know the current problems and improve their product to satisfy consumers.

As per claim 35, Sheflott in view of Goldberg in view of Kappel further disclose that the task sheets are selectively issued to the technical divisions according to the state of progress (see

As per claim 36, Sheflott in view of Goldberg in view of Kappel further show that it would have been obvious that a plurality of task sheets are issued to design divisions. Kappel shows that activities

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can be issued to different agents (see Figure 2). At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to a person skilled in the art to issue separate tasks to different divisions and personnel, such as a design division, in order to discuss details about the aesthetic appearance of the final product.

As per claim 37, Sheflott in view of Goldberg in view of Kappel further show that it would have been obvious that a task sheet is issued to a quality certification division when a design division returns a task sheet issued thereto indicating completion of a task of the design division. Kappel shows that activities can be issued to different agents (see Figure 2). At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to a person skilled in the art for a design division to hand off a task to a quality certification division after the design division has indicated the completion of a task in order to inspect the quality of the work performed by the design division.

As per claim 38, Sheflott in view of Goldberg in view of Kappel further show that it would have been obvious that a task sheet issued to a design division and a task sheet issued to a production division are issued simultaneously. Kappel shows that activities can be started simultaneously given that results from one activity are not needed to start the other activity (see Figure 2). At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to a person skilled in the art to simultaneously assign tasks to a design division and a production division in order to take advantage of concurrency.

As per claim 39, Sheflott in view of Goldberg in view of Kappel further show that it would have been obvious to select the fifth step when tasks of the design division, the production division, and the quality certification division are complete. Sheflott in view of Goldberg shows that it is desirable that an entire business process must be completed before a certain date. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to a person skilled in the art to wait until a final product has been completed before putting the product out in the market.

6. Claim 40 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sheflott in view of Goldberg as applied to claim 27 above, and further in view of Official Notice.

Although the system disclosed by Sheflott in view of Goldberg shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose that details of a countermeasure are delivered as

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a report of invention to a patent division upon completion of the countermeasure task shared among the technical divisions.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Sheflott in view of Goldberg, as evidenced by Official Notice.

It is old and well known that products are patented to protect the time and money invested into creating that product. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to a person skilled in the art to document the functional details and steps in designing the product and have a patent division prepare the necessary documents to file for a patent.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 21-43 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Philip J. Chea whose telephone number is 571-272-3951. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:00-4:30 (1st Friday Off).

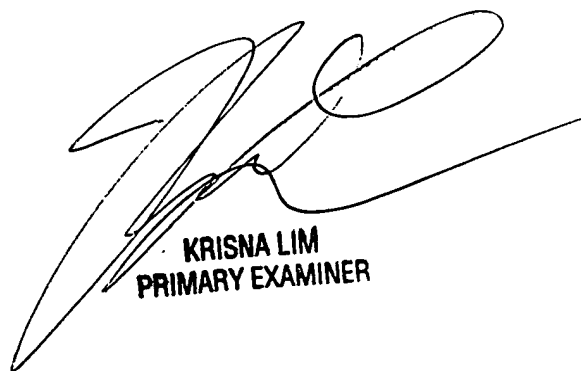
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Burgess can be reached on 571-272-3949. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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Philip J Chea
Examiner
Art Unit 2153

PJC 5/12/06



KRISNA LIM
PRIMARY EXAMINER